

LXXVI.—*A new Unstalked Crinoid from Christmas Island.*
By AUSTIN HOBART CLARK.

WHILE visiting the British Museum recently I found among the collections there a curious little comasterid which had been obtained at Christmas Island. I urged Professor Bell to describe it in order that I might mention it in my report upon the 'Investigator' crinoids, but with his characteristic generosity he suggested that it would be more fitting were I to do it, as I had become so deeply engrossed in the study of these animals.

This little comasterid represents a new species of the genus *Comissia*, a genus including eight species, occurring from South-eastern Africa to Ceylon and thence eastward to the Philippine Islands, all of which have been described since the publication of the 'Challenger' report.

The species of the genus *Comissia* never have more than ten arms; the cirri are always numerous and well-developed, and the distal cirrus segments always bear spines or tubercles on the dorsal surface, this serving to differentiate them at once from the species of *Comatula* and *Cominia*, the cirri of which are invariably smooth.

Comissia has no very close relatives in the East Indian region, though it falls in the same subfamily, Capillasterinæ, as *Capillaster* and *Comatella*, but in the West Indies it is represented by the allied *Leptonemaster* and *Comatilia*.

The species of *Comissia* are all sublittoral, occurring between 17 and 100 fathoms; though none of them inhabit water of any great depth, none have ever been found at the surface.

The new form described below differs somewhat abruptly from all the others in the genus in the great length of the teeth of the comb on the earlier pinnules, and by the large proportion of pinnulars occupied by the comb. It may be described as follows:—

Comissia pectinifer, sp. n.

Description.—Centrodorsal moderately large, with a moderately large flat dorsal pole and three closely crowded marginal rows of cirrus sockets.

Cirri xxxiv. 14–16 (usually 16), 14 mm. long; the eighth is a transition segment; the longer proximal segments are nearly twice as long as broad, slightly constricted centrally;

the two segments preceding the penultimate are squarish to one-third broader than long; the outer segments (beyond the transition segment) are very highly polished and bear small dorsal tubercles.

The ten arms are about 90 mm. long; the elements of the IBr series appear in external view to be united by syzygy, and are well separated laterally; the arms resemble those of *Comissia lütkeni*; the brachials overlap rather strongly. The distal intersyzygial interval is usually three oblique muscular articulations.

P_1 to p_4 provided with combs; p_1 is about 12 mm. long, and has a comb with about twenty-five exceptionally long teeth; the comb of p_4 has fifteen or sixteen teeth, beyond which extends a toothless tip; only nine segments of p_4 are not supplied with teeth.

Hab. Christmas Island; the type is in the British Museum.

The other known species of the genus *Comissia* are:—

Comissia ignota, A. H. Clark: Amirante Islands; 17 fathoms.

Comissia peregrina (Bell): Macclesfield Bank; 55-60 fathoms.

Comissia lütkeni, A. H. Clark: Philippine Islands; 49-74 fathoms.

Comissia dumetum, A. H. Clark: Philippine Islands; 58 fathoms.

Comissia hispida, A. H. Clark: Philippine Islands; 51 fathoms.

Comissia horridus, A. H. Clark: Philippine Islands; 58 fathoms.

Comissia scitulus, A. H. Clark: Philippine Islands; 58 fathoms.

Comissia sp. (figured, as a ten-armed specimen of *Comanthus parvicirra*, in Chadwick, 'Rep. Ceylon Pearl Oyster Fisheries,' Part ii., Supplementary Report xi., plate, fig. 13): Ceylon; about 100 fathoms.